

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:256

ANSWERED ON:03.08.2016

Telecom Facility to Gram Panchayats

Gawali (Patil) Ms. Bhavana;Puttaraju Shri C.S.

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has provided telephone and other Communication facilities to all Gram Panchayats especially in the backward and tribal areas of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the number of Gram Panchayats which are yet to be provided with telecom facility, State-wise including Karnataka; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to provide better telecom facility to Gram Panchayats?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE (IC) OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS &
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(SHRI MANOJ SINHA)

(a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE LOK SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (c) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 256 FOR 3RD AUGUST, 2016 REGARDING "TELECOM FACILITY TO GRAM PANCHAYATS".

(a) to (c) Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has provided Village Public Telephone (VPT) facility to 2,41,279 Gram Panchayats out of 2,42,198 Gram Panchayats on PAN India basis. Remaining 919 Village Panchayats have not been provided with VPT facilities due to various reasons such as thick forest, no inhabitation, submergence with urban areas and security concerns etc. VPTs have been provided in all the Gram Panchayats (5713) in Karnataka. The state / circle wise status of Gram Panchayats with regard to VPT facility as on 30.06.2016 is at Annexure-I. The VPT scheme was started in 2003 when the penetration of mobile telephony was low. It has now lost much of its relevance due to widespread use of mobile phone even in rural areas.

5,41,939 villages out of total 5,97,608 villages in the country are already covered with mobile services, leaving only 55,669 villages, i.e., 9.31%, without coverage. (State-wise details of uncovered villages are at Annexure-II). Mobile coverage to balance uncovered villages is likely to be provided in a phased manner over a period of five years.

National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) project, renamed as BharatNet, has planned to establish a network infrastructure by connecting all Gram Panchayats (approx. 2.5 lakh) in the country through Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) by using an optimal mix of underground fibre, fibre over power lines, radio and satellite media, for providing broadband connectivity by all categories of service providers on non-discriminatory basis.

The project is planned to be implemented in three phases. Under first phase of the project, 1 lakh Gram Panchayats (GPs) are to be connected by laying underground OFC by March 2017. Under second phase, connectivity will be provided to remaining 1.5 lakh GPs in the country using an optimal mix of underground fibre, fibre over power lines, radio and satellite media, by December, 2018. A state-of-the-art future-proof network, including fibre between districts and blocks and with for 5G services and Internet of Things era with underground OFC in ring architecture, is planned to be completed by 2023 under third phase.

As on 16.07.2016, Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) has been laid to 54,635 Gram Panchayats (GPs) with a total length of 1,26,853 km. Out of these, 7342 GPs have been provided with broadband connectivity.

The Department has taken several measures for expansion and improvement of telecommunication services in rural and remote areas as given below:

(i) Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for the North-Eastern Region (NER): On 10.09.2014, the Government approved a

proposal to implement a Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for the North-Eastern Region (NER). The Project envisages providing mobile coverage to 8621 identified uncovered villages by installation of about 6673 mobile towers, installation of 321 mobile tower sites along National Highways and strengthening of transmission network in the NER. The estimated cost of implementation is Rs. 5336.18 crore. The Project would be funded from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF). The tenders for setting of towers have already been floated.

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(ii) Mobile Communication Services in LWE affected areas: 2199 mobile towers are being set up in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected States with a total estimated cost of Rs.3567.58 crore. It will cover about 3000 villages in 10 LWE affected States. 2056 mobile towers are operational as on 18.07.2016.

(iii) Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep Islands: Telecom Commission has given 'in principle' approval on 07.11.2014 for Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan including provision of mobile connectivity for Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep Islands with a total estimated investment of Rs. 221.05 crore.

(iv) Provision of Mobile Services in Himalayan and Border States:
Work for preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPR) in respect of 4752 uncovered villages in Himalayan States (Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand) and 2138 villages Border States (Rajasthan, Gujarat, Punjab and Haryana) has been entrusted to M/s Telecom Consultations India Limited (TCIL).

Annexure-I

State/Circle-wise status of the VPT facilities (As on 30-06-2016)

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N. Name of Telecom

Circle/State No. of Village Panchyats

No. of Village Panchyats

provided with telephone

facilities No. of Village Panchyats

yet to be provided with telephone

facilities Remark

1 Andaman & Nicobar Islands 69 69 0 -

2 Andhra Pradesh 21870 21747 123 Non Feasible

3 Assam 2283 2283 0 -

4 Bihar 8412 8411 1 Non Feasible

5 Jharkhand 4562 4562 0 -

6 Gujarat 14855 14843 12 Non Feasible

7 Haryana 6083 6083 0 -

8 Himachal Pradesh 3241 3241 0 -

9 Jammu & Kashmir 4128 4116 12 Non Feasible

10 Karnataka 5713 5713 0 -

11 Kerala 978 978 0 -

12 Madhya Pradesh 23710 23710 0 -

13 Chhattisgarh 10757 10576 181 Non Feasible

14 Maharashtra 28089 28089 0 -

15 North-East- I* 1038 1038 0 -

16 North-East- II** 1795 1268 527 Non Feasible

17 Odisha 6236 6173 63 Non Feasible

18 Punjab 12317 12317 0 -

19 Rajasthan 9177 9177 0 -

20 Tamil Nadu 13837 13837 0 -

21 Uttar Pradesh (East) 37455 37455 0 -

22 Uttar Pradesh (West) 14516 14516 0 -

23 Uttarakhand 7546 7546 0 -

24 West Bengal 3531 3531 0 -

Total 242198

241279

919

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*North East-I -Meghalaya, Mizoram & Tripura

**North East-II-Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur & Nagaland

Annexure-II

State-wise list of Uncovered Villages

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Sr.No. Name of the State/UT Total number of inhabited villages No. of Uncovered Villages

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1. Andhra Pradesh 16335 3812
2. Arunachal Pradesh 5258 2886
3. Assam 25372 2885
4. Bihar 39073 2534
5. Chhattisgarh 19567 4041
6. Goa 320 65
7. Gujarat 17843 1275
8. Haryana 6642 2
9. Himachal Pradesh 17882 2416
10. Jammu & Kashmir 6337 460
11. Jharkhand 29492 5949
12. Karnataka 27397 0
13. Kerala 1017 0
14. Madhya Pradesh 51929 5926
15. Maharashtra 40959 4792
16. Manipur 2515 610
17. Meghalaya 6459 2389
18. Mizoram 704 258
19. Nagaland 1400 137
20. Odisha 47675 10398
21. Punjab 12168 91
22. Rajasthan 43264 770
23. Sikkim 425 23
24. Tamil Nadu 15049 113
25. Telangana 10347 1009
26. Tripura 863 2
27. Uttar Pradesh 97814 266
28. Uttarakhand 15745 1876
29. West Bengal 37469 487
30. Andaman & Nicobar 684 190
31. Puducherry 0
32. Dadra & Nagar Haveli 5
33. Daman & Diu 1
34. Lakshadweep 1
TOTAL 597608 55669
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